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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 000078

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SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE: MORATINOS URGES EXPANSION OF QUARTET TO INCLUDE ARAB REPRESENTATIVE

REF: MADRID DAILY REPORT FOR 1/11/07

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Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens, reason 1.4 (D)

¶1. (U) Summary. Participants in a high level event to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the 1991 Madrid Middle East Conference recalled the spirit of the 1991 Conference, discussed the problems facing current Middle East peace negotiators, urged deeper USG engagement in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and, predictably, called for a new large-scale Middle East peace conference to jump-start the peace process. Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos set the tone for the event during the inauguration, saying that the problems facing the region, including Iraq and the Iran nuclear crisis, could only be resolved through a major new conference. He asserted that Spain's recent peace initiative had been accepted "in essence" by the European Council and had served to reactivate the Quartet. Moratinos argued for an expansion of the Quartet to include the Arab League. Other participants urged that any new conference come under the auspices of the UN, which would then act as the guarantor that all parties would follow through on their commitments. FM Moratinos and EU High Representative Javier Solana said that the EU would take quick action in the first half of 2007 to stimulate the MEPP. The DCM attended one of the two dinners related to the event and Poloff attended the opening and closing sessions of the event, which were open to the public, but organizers restricted the majority of the deliberations to invited guests only. End Summary.

//MORATINOS KICKS OFF THE COMMEMORATION//

¶2. (U) The commemoration, "Madrid: 15 Years Later," was the brainchild of FM Moratinos, but was organized by the "Toledo International Peace Center," the Seville-based "Three Cultures Foundation," the NGO "Search for Common Ground," and the Brussels-based International Crisis Group. During his remarks inaugurating the conference, Moratinos said that progress on the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian disputes could only be "consolidated if they are part of a new international peace conference" that also addresses Iraq and the Iran nuclear crisis. Moratinos acknowledged the skepticism with which this proposal has been met, but insisted that none of the critics had demonstrated to him why a conference would be counter-productive. He said the situation today was far worse than in 1992 and asserted that Spain's sense of urgency was shared by many parties, including the European Council and the Quartet.

//HIGH LEVEL PARTICIPATION//

¶3. (U) Moratinos made an all out effort to secure high level

participation and he was not disappointed. The event began with written statements from former Soviet leader Gorbachev, former President Clinton, and former Secretary James Baker. Former President Felipe Gonzalez presided over the public sessions, which included remarks by:

- EU High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana
- Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa,
- European Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner,
- Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt,
- Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store,
- Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moller
- UN Special Coordinator for the MEPP Alvaro de Soto
- GCC Secretary General Abdul Rahman bin Hamad al-Attiyah

Hans Blix and EU Special Representative to the MEPP Marc Otte also attended.

¶4. (U) There was no official representation from the countries in the region, but there were many current and former officials that attended in their personal capacities, including:

Israel:

- Former FM Shlomo Ben-Ami
- Former Military Intelligence official Uri Sargie
- Dalia Rabin of the Yitzak Rabin Center
- Knesset members Ophir Pines-Paz and Israel Hasson
- Former Barak adviser Pini Meidan-Shani, and others

Syria:

- Riad Dauoudi, Director of the Judicial Department for the Presidency
- Bushra Kanafani, Syrian spokesman at the 1991 Madrid Conference

Egypt:

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- Former Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher
- Osama al-Baz, Adviser to President Mubarak and former Foreign Minister

Jordan:

- Jawad Anani, Adviser to Prince Hassan and member for Jordanian negotiating team in 1991
- Abdel Salam Majali, Former Prime Minister
- Taher Masri, Former Prime Minister
- Marwan Muasher, Former Foreign Minister

Palestinian Territories:

- Hanan Ashrawi, former PA Spokesperson
- Jibril Rajoub, former National Security Adviser
- Mohammed Shtayyeh, former Minister of Housing
- Mustafa Barghouti, independent presidential candidate
- Sufian Abu Zaida, former minister of Parliament

Lebanon:

- Misbah al Ahdab, member of Hariri's "Future Movement"
- Ghassan Salameh, former Minister of Culture
- Amine Gemayel, former President

U.S. participants included:

- Former Ambassador Samuel Lewis
- Former Ambassador Nick Veliotis
- Former Ambassador Dan Kurtzer
- Former Ambassador Theodore Kattouf
- Rob Malley, International Crisis Group, former NSC Director for Near East

(NOTE: Post sought to arrange a meeting for the Ambassador with U.S. participants, but they were in Madrid for a brief period and we were unable to finalize a meeting. END NOTE.)

//KEY STATEMENTS//

¶5. (U) Though many of the statements during the public sessions recounted the experiences of the 1991 Madrid Conference, several were relevant to ongoing events or captured the tone of the meetings as a whole:

- Spanish Deputy Foreign Minister Bernardino Leon said that Spain's policy towards the region was guided by the principles and spirit of the 1991 Madrid Conference and by the processes/initiatives that stemmed from that event. Leon said that in 1991, both the parties to the conflict and external actors were committed to doing what was necessary to achieve peace, but that this spirit was now absent. He cited the "crucial" leadership of Felipe Gonzalez, the USG, and Shlomo Ben Ami (this last won a round of applause). Leon asserted the legitimacy of a greater voice on the MEPP, citing military, financial, and political contributions to the region. He said that the clear lessons of recent events were that:

- A) Unilateral measures could not be effective;
- B) There could be no military solution to the problems of the region;
- C) The Palestinian people required urgent humanitarian assistance; and
- D) No regional actors could be excluded from an international conference to reach a comprehensive peace.

- Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa was deeply critical of Israel throughout his statement and argued that the principal failure of the 1991 Madrid Conference had been that the UN was not given the leading role. Moussa said that the lack of a strong follow-up mechanism had also laid the groundwork for failure since it had allowed the Israelis to drag their feet on implementing their commitments. He argued that the Israeli-Palestinian dispute should not be subordinated to the fight against terrorism, but rather that this conflict would undermine any progress against extremists. Moussa said that the establishment of a Palestinian state and the return of the Golan Heights to Syria were "must-do" items for progress on regional peace. He asserted that the Arab world had extended the hand of friendship to Israel in 1991, but that Israel had never reciprocated. Moussa admonished Israel to "not fear peace, but instead seek integration with the Middle East community."

- Norwegian FM Jonas Gahr Store made a strong pitch for increased USG engagement on the Israeli Palestinian issue and said that Israel had to deliver improved conditions for the Palestinian people. He said the regional situation was now far worse than in 1991 and that the international community should work to deny the efforts of extremists bent on blocking the peace process. Store said that conflicts

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ranging from the Horn of Africa to Iraq and Iran were increasingly linked and that a new international peace conference was needed, most importantly to promote a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

- Danish FM Per Stig Moller placed greater emphasis on the parties to the conflict, saying that the international community had a supporting role, but that the parties themselves had the primary responsibility for creating the conditions for strengthened negotiations. He said Hamas' failure to recognize the Quartet Principles was working against the interests of the Palestinian people.

- UN Special Coordinator to the MEPP Alvaro de Soto discussed the work of the Quartet and the state of the Roadmap and said that just as many of the speakers were calling on Israel to recognize the impossibility of a military solution to its various conflicts, so should the international community emphasize to the Palestinians that their internal disputes could not be resolved by violence.

//CONCLUSIONS//

¶ 6. (U) In summing up the commemoration, Felipe Gonzalez said that his key conclusions were that the USG had to assume a much greater role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and that the events in the region supported his observation that no power had carried out a "successful occupation" since the end of the Second World War (evidently omitting China's takeover of Tibet and Morocco's current control of Western Sahara, among other successful annexations). Gonzalez said that all of the parties should understand that one had to negotiate with opponents as well as with friends to achieve key objectives.

¶ 7. (U) Javier Solana noted that he had just arrived from the U.S., where he had discussed many of the issues that were the subject of the Madrid event. He expressed the view that the viability of the Roadmap and related initiatives was really unknown, since the necessary political will had never been fully applied to test such initiatives. Solana said he was convinced that the EU had to act immediately to promote improved conditions and would focus on obtaining results in the first half of 2007.

//ADDING ARAB LEAGUE TO QUARTET?//

¶ 8. (U) Finally, Moratinos closed the event by reviewing what he described as initial USG skepticism of the eventually groundbreaking Oslo accords. He said this demonstrated that all members of the international community had a responsibility to advance peace whenever the possibility demonstrated itself, even in the face of skepticism. He again stated that no interlocutor had been able to convince him of the downsides of moving forward with a major new Middle East conference since, he said, such a conference would only be intended to stimulate re-engagement in what was an increasingly dire environment. Moratinos unveiled a new recommendation in suggesting that the Quartet be expanded to include an Arab component, such as the Secretary General of the Arab League (press reports subsequently indicated that Javier Solana had played down the possibility of such an expansion). Moratinos then read a brief statement summarizing the conclusions of the conference, including a call by "most" participants for the organization of a major new Middle East peace conference.

//COMMENT//

¶ 9. (C) Given the near universal calls for greater USG engagement on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, it struck us as ironic that neither the Spanish Government nor the organizers of the event seemed particularly interested in USG participation in this conference. Apart from inviting the Ambassador in the last few days to two ceremonial dinners and a last-minute request that the Embassy help obtain a statement of support from former President Bush, we are not aware of any invitation to USG officials to participate more deeply in the event. More broadly, this event demonstrated that Spain will continue to push hard within the EU and in the region to obtain support for a political conference on the Middle East, and that Spain will likely ramp up this effort in the first months of 2007.

Aguirre